REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the time taken by the Examiner to review Applicant's present application. This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Official Action mailed November 8, 2005. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5, 7, 9, 12-14 and 19-23 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,731,644 ("Epps"). Claim 1 recites:

> A method comprising:
> receiving a plurality of frames;
> storing the frames in a receive buffer, wherein the receive buffer is configured to be accessed in a first-in-first-out fashion;
> storing header information corresponding to each of the frames in a header storage, wherein the header storage is configured to provide access to the header information in the same order as the frames;
> retrieving header information from the header storage, wherein the header information corresponds to a first frame;
> prior to the first frame reaching a head position in the receive buffer, making a routing decision for delivering the first frame to its destination based upon the header information read from the header storage;
> retrieving the first frame from the receive buffer; and
> routing the first frame based upon the routing decision.

As can be noted, Claim 1 recites storing the "frames" and storing "header information". A frame, as would be understood in the art, includes the header while header information can include the header or selected routing information from the header. *See,* '755 Application, page 11, lines 1-30. Because the entire frame is stored, the entire frame can be routed based on the routing information in the corresponding header information without having to multiplex the header information back onto the payload of the frame.

According to Epps, on the other hand, the first n-bytes of a received packet (i.e., the header portion) in buffer 215 are placed in header FIFO 320, while the remaining bytes of the packet are placed in tail FIFO 330. *See,* Epps at col. 5, lines 51-55. Thus, the bytes of the packet are fragmented between the two FIFO queues, neither of which stores the entire packet. The packet header and tail portions are later rejoined in the packet receive stage 1220 "in

joining circuit 1350, which is, in one embodiment of the present invention, a simple multiplexer." *See*, id. at col. 7, lines 3-10. Put another way, the system of Epps strips an arbitrary n-bytes (the header portion) off of a packet and stores these bytes in one FIFO while storing the remaining bytes (the tail portion) in another FIFO and later reassembled. The tail portion is only a portion of a packet and is not a frame. Thus, Epps does not teach or suggest a memory structure in which a frame is stored in a receive buffer while header information is stored in header memory such that a routing decision can be made for the frame before the frame reaches the head of the receive buffer. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that Epps does not anticipate or make obvious Claim 1. For similar reasons, Applicant submits that Epps does not anticipate Claims 9 or 19. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner point where the missing features of Epps can be found in the cited art or allow Claims 1, 9 and 19 and the respective dependent claims.

Applicant has now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. Other than as explicitly set forth above, this reply does not include an acquiescence to statements, assertions, assumptions, conclusions, or any combination thereof in the Office Action. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of the pending claims. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below for prompt action in the event any issues remain.

The Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-3183 of Sprinkle IP Law Group.

Respectfully submitted,

Sprinkle IP Law Group
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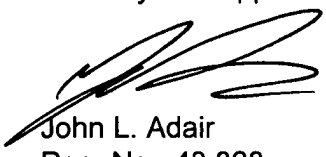

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